

AGENDA ITEM III A and B

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

**INTERCOLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
NURSING (ICMSN) PROGRAM**

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA - LAFAYETTE, SOUTHEASTERN
LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY, AND MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY**

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING - GERONTOLOGY SPECIALTY

AND

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY - BATON ROUGE

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING - GERONTOLOGY OPTION

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. MSN Program Activity, May 2003 - May 2004

In May 2003, three institutions of the ICMSN (ULL, SLU, and McNeese) submitted a proposal to form a new MSN consortium separate from SUBR. These three universities expressed a desire to move into a new curricular arrangement with different degree options other than those provided by the ICMSN. SUBR at first did not object to this proposal; the proposal was then reviewed by external consultants who recommended approval with stipulations. Included within this proposal was a new Gerontology specialty which would be offered by all three affected institutions. In January-March 2004, SUBR expressed a series of objections to the new consortium, citing: (a) program duplication issues, including prospects for the development of a new Gerontology option within its own MSN program; (b) likely adverse impacts upon SUBR students in existing MSN and PhD programs; and c) possible program accreditation problems. In light of SUBR's concerns, the three University of Louisiana universities decided in May 2004 to withdraw their proposal for a separate and new consortium and instead asked the Regents to consider their request within the confines of the existing ICMSN. Later that same month, all four ICMSN schools met with appropriate Regents staff to formulate a new working arrangement for consortium activities. This agreement stated the following:

- 1. The ICMSN remains in effect between Southern University-Baton Rouge (SUBR), the University of Louisiana-Lafayette (ULL), Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), and McNeese State University (McNeese).**

- 2. The composition of the Governing Council for the ICMSN will be expanded to include the Vice President/Chancellor for Academic Affairs of each member university and a member of the staff of the Board of Regents (ex-officio) to be appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education. Mr. Gerard Killebrew, Associate Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs, is appointed to be the Regents' representative.**
- 3. The Board of Regents will immediately entertain the proposal from ULL/SLU/ McNeese for program changes to MSN program offerings (with the exception of the Gerontology option/specialty, to be considered later). This proposal has already been reviewed by a team of external consultants, the consultants' report submitted, and institutional responses to the consultants' report received. Regents' deliberations of this proposal will be guided by the report of external consultants and institutional responses to the consultants' report. Since the program changes referred to above do not duplicate existing or proposed MSN program options/specialties that have been or proposed to be offered by SUBR, unnecessary program duplication will not be a relevant issue. Any and all actions taken by the Board of Regents concerning these proposals will be within the context and structure of the ICMSN.**
- 4. SUBR will submit a proposal for a new Gerontology option/specialty as part of its MSN program offerings. Upon receipt of this proposal, the Board of Regents will hire an appropriate external consultant to conduct an expedited review. The report of the external consultant will be sent to SUBR for a response. Once SUBR's response has been received, the Board of Regents will simultaneously consider both SUBR's proposed Gerontology option/specialty and the ULL/SLU/McNeese's proposed Gerontology option/specialty. Regents' deliberations of these proposals will be guided by reports of external consultants and institutional responses to those reports. Any and all actions taken by the Board of Regents concerning these proposals will be within the context and structure of the ICMSN.**
- 5. The next meeting of the ICMSN will be convened by Mr. Killebrew as soon as possible to effect changes to the Consortium as required by nos. 1 and 2 above and to implement any and all subsequent Regents' actions concerning proposed new program options as described in nos. 3 and 4 above.**

This agreement was confirmed in a letter to all parties dated May 20, 2004. [Staff Note: This document is on file in the Office of Academic Affairs.]

B. Actions of the Board of Regents, June 2004

At its meeting of June 24, 2004, the Board of Regents acted as follows:

1. **Approval is granted for all four institutions (Southern University-Baton Rouge, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Southeastern Louisiana University, and McNeese State University) of the Intercollegiate Consortium for the M.S. in Nursing to offer M.S. in Nursing degrees in the following specialty areas and roles:**

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Specialty Area</u>	<u>Role(s)</u>
SUBR, ULL, McNeese, and SLU	Adult Psychiatric & Mental Health	Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Practitioner
	Adult Health	Nurse Practitioner
	Medical-Surgical	Clinical Nurse Specialist
	NA	Nurse Administrator
	NA	Nurse Educator

The Governing Council of the ICMSN shall immediately proceed with all actions needed to implement these curricula at all affected institutions as soon as feasible.

2. **In addition, SUBR will continue to offer its current array of Family Health curricula.**
3. **All master-level programs in Nursing at the four affected institutions shall be identified as M.S. in Nursing (CIP Code 51.1601). All titles and CIP Codes previously used to reference the M.S. in Nursing programs at these institutions degrees are now obsolete.**

With these actions, all issues regarding ICMSN program offerings were resolved, with the exception of proposed Gerontology options/specialties. The staff summary which follows addresses this remaining curricular issue.

II. PROPOSED GERONTOLOGY OPTIONS/SPECIALITIES - ULL/SLU/MCNEESE AND SUBR

A. Review Process and Results

1. ULL/SLU/McNeese Proposed Gerontology Specialty

The review team which examined the proposed new University of Louisiana MSN consortium assessed a Gerontology specialty as part of the entire proposal. This review committee was composed of Dr. Barbara Johnson, Texas Tech University Health Science Center; Dr. Dee Williams, the University of Florida; and Dr. Kay Lindgren, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Of these three, Dr. Johnson was largely responsible for assessment of the Gerontology specialty, since her institution offered this area. Relevant comments from their final report concerning both the proposed new consortium and the Gerontology specialty in particular are cited below:

a. Strengths

- i. A history of strong collaboration.
- ii. Effective and efficient use of resources.
- iii. Widespread use of distance education technologies.
- iv. Proposed curricular options well matched to serve state and national nursing needs.

b. Weaknesses

- i. Universities must insure that there are sufficient numbers and types of classroom and clinical learning experiences for each specialty.
- ii. Universities must insure that there are adequate numbers of qualified nursing faculty members, appropriately credentialed and current in practice to teach students and supervise clinical learning experiences in each specialty track. *With specific regard to Gerontology, the consultants observed that while the three schools together proposed seven faculty to staff the Gerontology specialty, only one was a appropriately credentialed as a nationally/state certified Gerontology nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialist.*

- iii. Universities must standardize enrollment policies, establish a common grading scale, and identify reasonable faculty/student communication expectations for online offerings

2. SUBR - Gerontology Option

SUBR's proposed Gerontology option was reviewed separately from the proposed University of Louisiana MSN consortium by Dr. Ann Spellbring, Coordinator of Gerontology Studies at the University of Maryland School of Nursing. Relevant comments for her final report are summarized below:

a. Strengths

- i. Need is well-documented.
- ii. Proposed option fits well within existing MSN program design.
- iii. Sufficient faculty with appropriate credentials are already in place. Three of the five faculty are nationally/state certified Gerontology nurse practitioners or clinical specialists.
- iv. Two faculty are nationally-recognized Gerontology educational experts.
- v. Proposed curriculum is consistent with national benchmarks and competencies. Part-time study and distance learning opportunities have already been developed.
- vi. SUBR's College of Nursing has strong history of securing external funding for student support.
- vii. Option can be implemented immediately without any additional resources.

b. Weaknesses

None.

B. Institutional Responses to Reports of External Consultants

1. ULL/SLU/McNeese

The three universities responded in concert. There was general agreement with all consultant recommendations. In response, each recommendation was addressed by outlining processes to address perceived weaknesses and/or problematic areas. Specifics regarding Gerontology faculty resource needs were not provided.

2. SUBR

Since there were no negative comments, the University simply concurred with the consultant's conclusion that the proposed Gerontology option be approved.

III. STAFF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

1. Need

There is no doubt that Louisiana has an insufficient number of Gerontology nurse practitioners/clinical specialists. There is currently no such program available in the state. It is also true that Nurse Gerontology programs are not prevalent across the US. Of the 370 public and private colleges and universities which offer graduate-level education in nursing, only 47 have a Gerontology option/specialty.

2. Resource Issues

Specialty programs require specific and unique faculty/clinical resources. These resources appear to be evident at SUBR, but less so at ULL/SLU/McNeese. It is relevant to observe that SUBR's current Nursing faculty has three Gerontological specialists while, combined, ULL/SLU/McNeese has only one. Further, SUBR proposes Gerontology as its only new specialty, while ULL/SLU/McNeese are already involved in developing and implementing three new specialty areas (Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health, Adult Health, and Medical-Surgical) across all campuses. It would appear, therefore, that SUBR would be better positioned to devote the time and resources needed to develop a program of quality.

3. Desegregation Concerns/Unnecessary Program Duplication

The Desegregation Settlement Agreement provides for development of a Ph.D. in Nursing at SUBR; however, the ICMSN program at SUBR was developed independent of any desegregation effort. It should be noted that SUBR has for a long-time included Gerontology as a research area within its Ph.D. While this in of itself does not preclude the development of Gerontology studies elsewhere, there is an obvious benefit to concentrating master-level program efforts at the same institution where there is related doctoral research. If, however, after a certain period of program operation at SUBR, there continues to be a critical need for more master-level Gerontology nurses in Louisiana, then it may be necessary to consider duplicate program offerings in this area. In the meantime, SUBR should make available Gerontology nurse training to students at other ICMSN schools on a resource-available basis.

B. Staff Recommendations

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant approval for the proposed M.S. in Nursing-Gerontology and Post-Master Certificate-Gerontology Nursing at Southern University-Baton Rouge, effective immediately. The University shall offer master-level Gerontology nurse education coursework to students at other universities in the Intercollegiate Consortium for the M.S. in Nursing (the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, Southeastern Louisiana University, and McNeese State University) on a resource-available basis.

The staff further recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee defer indefinitely a request from the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, Southeastern Louisiana University, and McNeese State University for M.S. in Nursing Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner. During AY 2007-2008, the Board of Regents shall conduct a needs analysis study to determine whether an additional master-level Gerontology Nursing program is needed and where such a program might be developed.